

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A savory, shelf-stable, particulate, meltable, food-grade plasticized composition is disclosed, having a water activity A_w of 0.70 or below. The composition is an oil-in-water emulsion of: a protein that forms a thermally reversible meltable gel, plasticizer components to solubilize the protein, comprising a polyol plasticizer and a non-polyol plasticizer, a level of an edible oil component sufficient to provide proper texture, mouthfeel, and melt characteristics to the plasticized composition, and a savory flavoring component, and typically comprises 10-30 wt-% protein, 15-50 wt-% plasticizer component, including, based upon the total weight of the composition, 10-40 wt-% polyol plasticizer and 3-15 wt-% non-polyol plasticizer, 10-40 wt-% oil component, 5-25 wt-% moisture, and 10-40 wt-% flavor characterizing component. Also disclosed is a process for producing such a composition, which has a savory inclusion and is designed to be melted onto snack foods, etc. The involves combining a protein that forms a thermally reversible meltable gel, plasticizer components including a polyol plasticizer and a non-polyol plasticizer, an edible oil, a savory inclusion, and water in an amount that provides a water activity A_w of 0.70 or less, heating the combined components under agitation to solubilize the protein, establish a homogenous oil-in-water emulsion, and provide a cooked gel product, casting and cooling the cooked gel product, and shredding or grinding the cast cooked gel product for consumption.